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TAGS: PGOV INR PE
SUBJECT: REGIONAL ELECTIONS: FRAGMENTED FIELD FAVORS LOCAL
CANDIDATES AND APRA

REF: A. LIMA 3579

    ¶B. LIMA 2927

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

Summary
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¶1. (SBU) A fragmented field of multiple contenders -- an
average of nine candidates for each regional presidency --
favors both independent local candidates and the established
APRA party in Peru's upcoming regional and municipal
elections.  Schisms and other problems in the Ollanta Humala
camp (refs) have diminished the prospect of a Peruvian
Nationalist Party (PNP) sweep in the south and the sierra.
(The PNP has not presented a candidate in Cuzco, where Humala
took 73 percent in June.)  The APRA Government's targeted
programs and promises to distribute more authority and
resources to the regions are likely to help APRA candidates.
Such electoral fragmentation could undermine long-term
governability even as it leaves Humala weakened and APRA
alone as a party with nation-wide reach. End Summary.

Plethora of Weak Parties
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¶2. (U) Peruvian voters will elect regional presidents,
mayors, and city council members ("regidores") on November
¶19.  There is an average of nine candidates for each of the
25 regional presidencies, and 16 regions have more than nine
candidates -- with Huancavelica topping the list at 13.  The
municipal races have similarly large numbers of candidates.
(Note: The numbers may drop if candidates are ruled
ineligible by the National Elections Board (JNE). End Note.)

¶3. (U) While national parties represent two-thirds of the
candidates, they have a weak penetration in the provinces.
Only four are competing in 12 or more regional campaigns:
APRA and Ollanta Humala's Nationalist Party (PNP) in 23
regions; Humala's former ally the Union por el Peru (UPP) in
19; and the Si Cumple (Fujimorista) party in 16.  (Note: The
Fujimoristas have reclaimed the popular party name of "Si
Cumple" (He Delivers) from former President Fujimori's past
campaigns. End Note.)  The Unidad Nacional alliance (under
which Lourdes Flores ran for president) is only running
candidates in 9 regions and forming alliances in 3 others,

underscoring the weakness of national parties.

¶4. (U) This leaves a vacuum which local candidates
representing regional groupings focused on regional issues
are filling.  The proliferation of parties, local
organizations and candidates has fragmented the political
landscape.  If past patterns hold, these local candidates
will get significant support, but few if any will gain a
majority.  For example, in 2002, two-thirds of the winning
candidates for regional president scored less than 30 percent
of the vote.  At that time, the fragmentation helped APRA
secure 12 (of 25) regional presidencies.  Even if APRA does
less well this time, it should still emerge as the only party
with significant nation-wide representation.

¶5. (SBU) The probable scenario of regional presidencies
elected without majority backing could pose governability
problems.  This challenge could be further complicated by the
election of many unaligned regional movements that win
regional presidencies.  The APRA government would be
hard-pressed to generate a coherent global plan to deal with
this challenge, but rather find itself addressing an
explosion of narrow regional and local demands on myriad
fronts.

Humala's Party Vulnerable
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¶6. (SBU) Despite Humala's dominance in the sierras and the
south in Peru's presidential race, the PNP is vulnerable in
these same areas.  (Note: In the presidential run-off Humala
won the popular vote in 15 regions, in 10 of those with more
than 60 percent. End Note.)  Humala's candidates will split
some of the vote with those of his former UPP party, which
has registered a separate list of candidates for the local

and regional elections.  In addition, his own party (PNP) is
divided in Congress, Humala faces a human rights trial that
limits his travel, and he has little to offer his party's
candidates by way of material inducements or support.
Consequently, many regional and local candidates that rallied
behind Humala in the presidential elections are going on
their own for the November elections (Ref B).  Cuzco presents
the most graphic example of Humala's political
ineffectiveness.  Although he won 73 percent of the vote in
June, infighting has resulted in his PNP party failing even
to register a candidate this time around.

Lima elections
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¶7. (U) In spite of his high popularity, Lima mayor Luis
Castaneda of the Unidad Nacional alliance faces a similar
situation, i.e., 10 competitors representing a range of
groups.  And most observers acknowledge that it is
Castaneda's personal appeal rather than UN party affiliation
that explain his popular support.  Humberto Lay, the
(embattled) evangelical leader of the Restauracion Nacional
party currently places a distant second in polls.  Other
candidates are Benedicto Jimenez of APRA, a retired colonel
and former chief of the anti-terrorism police, and Gino Costa
of the Somos Peru party, a former Minister of Interior.
Humala's former Vice Presidential candidate, Gonzalo Garcia
Nunez, is running on the PNP ticket.

Government Largesse to Regions
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¶8. (SBU) The APRA Government's targeted programs (Sierra
Exportadora) and promises to distribute more authority and
resources from Lima (decentralize) are likely to help APRA
candidates.  While the Garcia Administration has made
decentralization and targeted assistance programs a
first-tier priority, some observers believe this also has a
clear political dimension, and could be used to encourage
favor-seeking voters to choose APRA candidates who are seen
as better able to leverage central government resources for
the benefit of their regions or localities.

Comment: Proliferation Breeds Ingovernability
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¶9.  (SBU) The proliferation of parties, local organizations
and candidates fragments the political landscape, and will
make it difficult for an elected leader to obtain a clear
mandate.  This could undermine long-term governability even
as it leaves Humala weakened and APRA alone as the party with
nation-wide reach.  At the moment, the scenario suggests a
heightening of 2002 trends, when local candidates and APRA
dominated, but most victors won without an absolute majority.
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